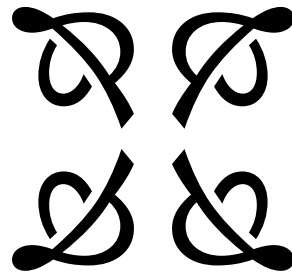


DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND NC AMERICAN INDIAN COMMUNITIES: A REPORT OF FINDINGS

Based on Meetings Conducted in June, 2003

*A project of the North Carolina Council for Women
and Domestic Violence Commission, in collaboration with
the North Carolina Commission on Indian Affairs*



*Report completed in collaboration with the
North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence*

Domestic Violence and NC American Indian Communities: A Report of Findings

OVERVIEW:

In June 2003, the North Carolina Council for Women and Domestic Violence Commission visited ten of the twelve North Carolina American Indian Tribes and Organizations in an effort to obtain and share information about the types of services offered to NC American Indians affected by domestic violence and their families. The following are the Tribes and Organizations from which the data for this report were collected¹:

- the Waccamaw Siouan Tribe in Columbus County;
- the Cumberland County Association for Indian People;
- the Guilford Native American Association;
- the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe in Halifax County;
- the Meherrin Indian Tribe in Hertford County;
- the Metrolina Native American Association in Mecklenburg County;
- the Lumbee Tribe in Robeson County;
- the Coharie Tribe in Sampson County;
- the Eastern Band of Cherokees in Swain County;
- and the Triangle Native American Association in Wake County.

The NC American Indian Tribes and Organizations which were visited shared historical and cultural information, as well as information about programs and services. They also participated in discussions of services available for North Carolina American Indian victims and survivors of domestic violence and their families in the community at large.

The North Carolina Council for Women and Domestic Violence Commission consulted with the Director of the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs regarding data collection efforts and opportunities for collaboration and coordination of services. This report was completed in collaboration with the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence.



¹ Scheduling difficulties prevented visits to the Indians of Person County and the Occaneechi Band of Saponi Nation in Alamance County.

NC American Indian Tribes and Organizations

In North Carolina there are eight American Indian Tribes and four Indian Organizations. American Indians live in many different counties across the state, but the organizational and tribal offices are housed in the twelve North Carolina counties that were the focus of the data collection efforts for this report.

According to 2000 Census data², there are 99,551 American Indians living in North Carolina. The largest group of these residents is the Lumbee Tribe, representing forty-seven percent of the American Indian population of North Carolina with a recorded population of 46,896. The populations of the other Tribes and Organizations that were visited are as follows: Eastern Band of Cherokees, 12,672; Occaneechi Band of Saponi, 462; Waccamaw Siouan Tribe, 1,706; Cumberland County Association for Indian People, 4,691; Guilford Native American Association, 1,944; Haliwa-Saponi Tribe, 1,801; Meherrin Indian Tribe, 269; Metrolina Native American Association, 2,439; Coharie Tribe, 1,086; and Triangle Native American Association, 2,152. Each of these Tribes and Organizations represents less than four percent of the American Indian Population of North Carolina.

A wide range of services are provided by the various Organizations and Tribes based on information gathered from the ten completed visits. The majority of the direct services are focused on providing housing, education, employment, childcare, and elder programs.

NC Council for Women and Domestic Violence Commission

The North Carolina Council for Women and Domestic Violence Commission administers state appropriated funding for 94 domestic violence programs in counties across the state. There are programs or satellite offices in 93 of North Carolina's 100 counties.

Findings

Each American Indian Tribe and Organization differed in its recognition of and response to domestic violence. All programs did, however, share anecdotal information about the effects of domestic violence on American Indian families within their communities. The information collected for this report reflects the prevalence of domestic violence in these communities; disclosure of domestic violence; reporting domestic violence and seeking services; barriers to seeking and receiving services; and resources and referrals. The findings are as follows:

- *Prevalence of domestic violence*

² Census 2000 data from Table NC GS 143 as found on the website of the NC Commission on Indian Affairs (www.doa.state.nc.us/doa/cia/indian.htm)

In order to determine the amount of domestic violence experienced by North Carolina American Indians, data should be collected from law enforcement, the court system, healthcare professionals, and domestic violence programs. In FY 2002-2003, domestic violence programs in North Carolina recorded providing services to 678 American Indian victims.

None of the state recognized Tribes and Organizations routinely or officially screens for domestic violence. Nonetheless, domestic violence is often uncovered when American Indians apply for housing or financial support, during the enrollment process, in conjunction with childcare services, and through participation in tribal activities such as genealogical projects.

- *Disclosure of domestic violence*
The Tribes and Organizations reported the belief that the following factors are extremely important to American Indian victims of domestic violence who decide to disclose: trust; sense of community, cultural perspective, and understanding; and rapport and personal relationship. The belief was expressed that American Indian victims would be more likely to disclose abuse to individuals with whom they have a bond, persons whom they trust and respect, and persons identified as community leaders or helpers.
- *Reporting and seeking services*
Many American Indian victims of domestic violence seek help from law enforcement, the courts, healthcare providers, and domestic violence programs. Many American Indian victims of domestic violence also seek help outside of these institutions from their local cultural and faith communities. The Tribes and Organizations included in this report recognized the unique role they can play in serving as American Indian community-based resources for referral of American Indian victims of domestic violence and their families to local domestic violence service providers, as well as having an important role in domestic violence prevention work within these American Indian communities.
- *Barriers to seeking and receiving services*
Many American Indian victims of domestic violence receive services and support from institutional and community based Organizations, but there are also numerous victims and families who do not or cannot access necessary services. Some of the reported barriers experienced by American Indian victims of domestic violence who are seeking services include: lack of transportation; lack of safe, adequate housing; lack of financial support or employment; lack of legal advocacy services; and lack of family and community support. American Indian Tribes and Organizations also cite challenges associated with living in rural communities with high rates of unemployment/underemployment, and high rates of alcoholism and substance abuse. These issues may disproportionately affect American Indian victims in their communities in North Carolina.

- *Resources and referrals*

The majority of the Indian community reported knowledge of and/or collaboration with their local domestic violence programs. Those that were previously unaware of local domestic violence programs expressed a willingness to collaborate with their local service providers and refer American Indian victims of domestic violence to the local programs for services in the future. During some of the visits with American Indian Tribes and Organizations, representatives from local domestic violence programs joined North Carolina Council for Women and Domestic Violence Commission staff in providing information about local domestic violence services, as well as receiving information about services and programs provided by the local Tribes and Organizations.

Recommendations

The North Carolina Council for Women and Domestic Violence Commission is committed to ensuring that all victims of domestic violence receive appropriate services from local service providers. To that end and in consideration of the information shared by the American Indian Tribes and Organizations, the following are potential opportunities for further action and collaboration:

- *Expansion of data collection and minimization of reporting error*

The North Carolina Council for Women and Domestic Violence Commission requires that local domestic violence service providers report detailed service statistics for victims seeking and/or receiving services from within the agencies. As part of this statistical reporting, programs denote how many victims were served within certain racial and ethnic categories, including American Indian. This compiled statistic represents the number of American Indian victims of domestic violence who seek services from their local domestic violence program, but does not take into account victims who are seeking services elsewhere. In order to accurately measure the incidence and impact of domestic violence in the American Indian community, it is recommended that all North Carolina American Indian Tribes and Organizations begin to screen for domestic violence. The North Carolina Council for Women and Domestic Violence Commission can work with the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs to develop a screening tool and/or develop questions to be inserted into existing forms and procedures for the purpose of counting the American Indian victims of domestic violence who have previously been going uncounted.

- *Domestic violence protocols*

Screening for domestic violence by North Carolina American Indian Tribes and Organizations can be part of an overall protocol to recognize and respond appropriately to domestic violence within the American Indian tribal communities in North Carolina. North Carolina American Indian Tribes and Organizations can develop a protocol for all programs within these communities that includes instructions on screening, safety planning, and referral to local domestic violence service providers for emergency and support services. If an American Indian

victim of domestic violence discloses to an entity within the American Indian community, the protocol can instruct on appropriate responses and referrals. Screening should not be conducted without an accompanying protocol. If a victim discloses through a screening tool and does not receive a helpful response and follow-up, the victim may feel unsupported, re-victimized, and/or may be placed in greater danger.

- *Inter-agency collaboration*

The North Carolina Council for Women and Domestic Violence Commission requires local domestic violence programs to collaborate with local stakeholders. Some of the possibilities for collaboration between local domestic violence programs and the American Indian community include: American Indian representation on domestic violence programs' boards of directors; invitations to American Indian representatives to attend community task force meetings and to serve on domestic violence committees and work groups. Domestic violence programs should work to achieve cultural competency and representation among staff and volunteers through trainings and professional development efforts. Local Indian communities may assist with this process. Domestic violence programs may partner with local American Indian Tribes and Organizations to seek funding for special projects and outreach efforts that identify and address specific cultural or geographic needs through the production of culturally competent materials and development of culturally competent services. Part of this cultural competency is to acknowledge the value of privacy within the Indian Community. It is important that American Indian victims of domestic violence be made aware that their county of residence does not dictate where they can receive services from domestic violence programs. When making referrals, information about programs in surrounding counties should be made available.

If you are interested in discussing these findings as they relate to programming in your own community, please feel free to contact the following persons in your area:

- **Kathleen Balogh, Western Region Director**

828-251-6169

Kathleen.balogh@ncmail.net

Counties Served: Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Yancey

- **Katherine Harrelson, Northwestern Region Director**

336-334-5094

Kathy.harrelson@ncmail.net

Counties Served: Alamance, Alleghany, Caswell, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, Orange, Person, Randolph, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes, Yadkin

- **Linda Murphy, Southeastern Region Director**

252-514-4868

Linda.murphy@ncmail.net

Counties Served: Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender, Sampson, Wayne

- **June Kimmel, Southwestern Region Director**

704-342-6367

june.kimmel@ncmail.net

Counties Served: Alexander, Anson, Burke, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Richmond, Rowan, Stanly, Union

- **Leslie Parker, Northeastern Region Director**

252-830-6595

leslie.parker@ncmail.net

Counties Served: Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Edgecombe, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Martin, Nash, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrell, Washington, Wilson

- **April Burgess, Central Region Director**

919-733-2455

april.burgess@ncmail.net

Counties Served: Chatham, Cumberland, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Harnett, Hoke, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Robeson, Scotland, Vance, Wake, Warren

Attachments:

- North Carolina American Indian Tribes and Organizations Index
- North Carolina Domestic and Sexual Violence and Displaced Homemakers Programs Index
- Resources Listing